R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 010 963 RC 000 690

THE MIGRANT MINISTRY.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST, NEW YORK

PUB DATE 66

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.09 HC-$0.56 14P.

DESCRIPTORS- *CHURCH MIGRANT PROJECTS, MIGRANT TRANSPORTATION, MIGRANTS, MIGRANT EDUCATION, MIGRANT HOUSING, LEGISLATION, MIGRANT WELFARE SERVICES, UNIONS, HEALTH SERVICES, NEW YORK CITY

THE MIGRANT MINISTRY IS AN INTERDENOMINATIONAL FIELD PROGRAM WHICH HAS SERVED THE NEEDS OF MIGRANT FARM WORKERS SINCE 1920. THIS DOCUMENT DESCRIBES THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM--NATIONAL GOALS, MAJOR CONCERNS IN THE FARM LABOR PROBLEM, RELATIONSHIP TO TITLE III-B OF THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT, AND NATIONAL BUDGET. THE INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY PROGRAMS OFFERED IN 1965 AND THE STATES OFFERING THESE PROGRAMS ARE LISTED. ALSO PRESENTED ARE THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS, RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPATING CHURCHES, AND SUGGESTED FARM LABOR LEGISLATION. MIGRANCY IS DISCUSSED WITH RESPECT TO ITS CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCHES, THE PROBLEMS OF TRANSPORTATION AND UNIONIZATION, AND THE CONCERNS OF AGRICULTURAL GROWERS. (RB)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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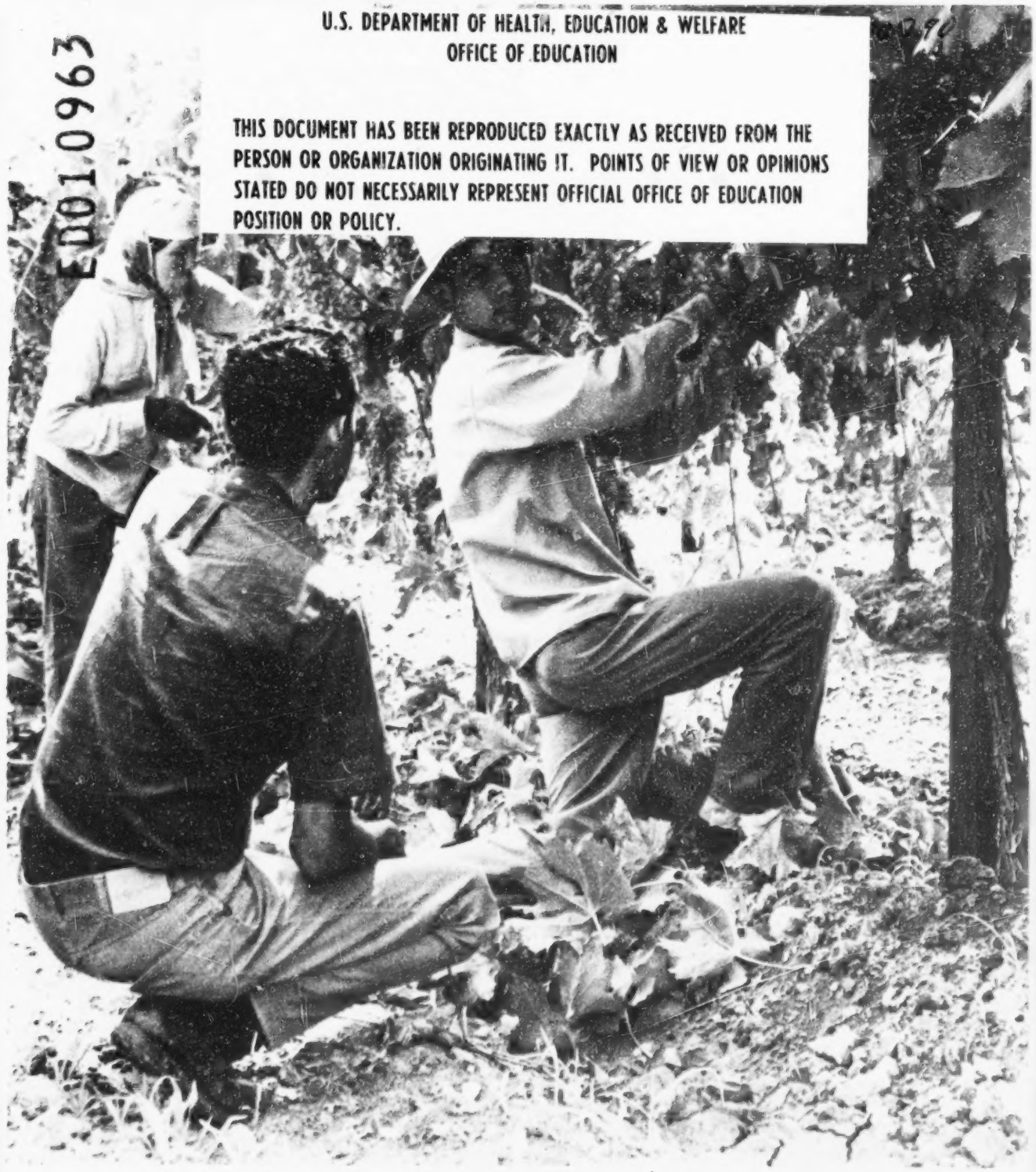

the MIGRANT MINISTRY

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THE MIGRANT MINISTRY

THE MIGRANT MINISTRY,* the most extensive interdenominational field program in American Protestantism, has been serving the needs of migratory farm workers since 1920. The national Migrant Ministry highlights the national problems of migratory farm workers, determines trends, coordinates concerns in migrant legislation, extends services to state units through regional and area field staff, and encourages the extension of ministries to both spiritual and physical needs. A strong partnership principle has developed as the many state and local councils of churches and United Church Women have assumed responsibility for program in their areas. It is the responsibility of all groups to keep policy and program flexible in the light of changing conditions.

What is a migrant? One dictionary defines him as "a person who moves from one country or place of abode to another, with a view to residence." In the Migrant Ministry, the term migrant applies to those who move with the crops, planting and harvesting, rarely with a view to residence.

Migrancy knows no barrier as far as race is concerned—it draws in anyone. It knows no language—any language is acceptable as long as the migrant can understand the orders given. While many migrants are Caucasians from poverty areas, many others are of Spanish-speaking descent or come from Negro families who live in the Southern states during the winter months. Indian Americans from reservations and nearby urban centers find seasonal employment in the Northwest and South Central areas, and an increasing number of Puerto Ricans are recruited from the Island for work on the East Coast, particularly since the importation of foreign labor has been terminated.

* Division of Christian Life and Mission, National Council of Churches.

THE CONCERN OF THE CHURCHES FOR SEASONAL FARM WORKERS

In a spirit of concern and love, we in the Migrant Ministry express our conscientious conviction regarding the conditions of agricultural migrants in the United States, both foreign and domestic. We deplore the present state of seasonal farm workers in our country. We believe that responsibility for improving their conditions must be shared by many persons and groups—growers, workers, consumers, labor unions, governmental agencies, and residents of sending and receiving communities.

The Migrant Ministry is a Christian ministry. Its motivation is Christ's command to "Go and do likewise." Its overarching purpose is that that more abundant life which Christ came to make available shall indeed be the experience of all God's children who are involved in the tending and harvesting of the nation's crops.

MAJOR CONCERNS

ON THE BASIS of the long and intimate experience with the needs, prolems, and conditions of seasonal farm workers, the Migrant Ministry identifies three major elements in the farm labor problem:

- *Irregularity of employment and low family income*

  Because of the seasonal nature of much farm work and the uncertainties of the farm labor market, hired farm workers typically achieve only fragmentary employment, with frequent and often prolonged periods of idleness. Their costs of finding employment are high and their wages when employed generally hover at or are substantially below the federally established minimum wage in other fields. Annual family incomes, even when several members of the family have been at work, average far below the point which is recognized in government terms as the poverty level.

- *Disfranchisement, exemption from social legislation, and discrimination*

  The political and legal situation of both migratory and settling farm workers marks them as second-class citizens. Mobility as well as low educational attainment tends to preclude them from voting privileges. Specific exemptions, written into law, bar them from coverage by Federally established minimum wages, unemployment insurance, and, in most states, workmen's compensation. Full implementation of legal Social Security coverage is limited. They are denied the right to organize for collective bargaining and access to the services of the National Labor Relations Board. They suffer widespread discrimination because of their transiency and, in many cases, their race or ethnic origin. Residency requirements often bar them from access to public assistance, medical care, hospitals, and other community facilities.

- *Cultural deprivation and isolation*

  Inadequate and interrupted education is the common lot of the children of seasonal farm workers. Academic retardation, early drop-out, cultural variation, and a language handicap invariably result. Housing and sanitation in migrant camps and transportation for migrant workers generally violate minimum standards of decency and safety. Health services are too seldom made available. Exclusion from the social and cultural aspects of community life and rejection by persons and institutions in the settled community, often including the churches, create for these people, a mobile but none the less impregnable ghetto.

NATIONAL GOALS

THE MIGRANT MINISTRY staff, in cooperation with state migrant committees, evaluated the various state programs in 1960. Based on this study, and on state and national policy statements regarding farm workers, the National Goals for the 5th Decade were developed. State migrant committees also began to work out new goals adapted to the particular needs

of their own regions. The national policy and program goals for this decade are:

1. To give migrant people opportunity for worship and Christian education, through local churches and through direct ministry, always without proselytism or coercion.
2. To reduce agricultural migrancy to a minimum.
3. To eliminate importation of labor.
4. To stimulate provision of basic education and vocational training for adults.
5. To stimulate extension of educational opportunity to children.
6. To work for improved conditions in housing and transportation.
7. To eliminate legal exemptions in labor legislation and discrimination in health and welfare services.
8. To encourage social acceptance and participation in church and community life.
9. To encourage among migrant people themselves responsible and democratic organization for self-help, economic and civic.
10. To keep policy and program flexible in the light of changing conditions.

Evaluation of program is a continuing process. From year to year state reports reflect progress which has been made toward achieving these goals. Now that the halfway point of the fifth decade has been passed, not only should we evaluate what has been done, but we need also to look ahead and determine what our emphases will be in the remaining years of this decade. The repeal of Public Law 78 and Public Law 414, which permitted importation of foreign labor for the harvesting of crops, makes it possible for us to deëmphasize goal 3. The Department of Labor reports that there were 82,200 more U.S. workers in seasonal jobs in fields and groves in 1965 than in 1964. On August 1965, according to these government figures, the total employed was 1,136,400 domestic workers and 1,200 foreign workers (a reduction of 98 per cent from the 68,700 foreign workers in 1964). A more efficient system of labor recruitment and placement must be developed, however, to insure an adequate labor supply when and where farm labor is needed.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT

THE IMPLEMENTATION of projects under Title 3B of the Economic Opportunity Act has brought new hope to many thousands of migrants who have benefited by programs such as basic education, job training, resettlement, child care, better housing, and other self-help projects. Many of the projects have been sponsored by interreligious groups and local or area Migrant Ministry organizations, as well as government agencies. It is evident, however, that there is a growing need for clarification of the relationship between Office of Economic Opportunity projects and the Migrant Ministry, and for discussion leading to guidelines and policies to help Migrant Ministry committees make decisions involving this re-

lationship. The Rev. William E. Scholes, Western Field Director for the Migrant Ministry has said that "our task in relation to federal poverty programs is to be the conscience of the community, evaluating the program in terms of achievement of goals, involvement of migrant people, and stewardship of funds."

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHURCHES

GOVERNMENT funds *cannot* finance the very special kinds of services that the church is equipped to do. The church's area of special responsibility could be outlined under four general headings:

- *Personal ministries*
  Seasonal farm workers must have access to ministries of the Christian faith, such as worship, Christian education, pastoral care, and alleviation of physical needs and opportunities for service. These ministries should be provided wherever possible within the context of the local congregational life and fellowship. In situations where the isolation of migrant camps makes it difficult for farm workers to participate in the life of the local congregation, the local people should assume the responsibility for cooperating with the Migrant Ministry to make religious services available. Agricultural workers should always be involved in a manner that respects their dignity and meets their spiritual need.

- *Community Development*
  The church recognizes that the farm worker generally is deprived of the power to participate in decision-making that affects his welfare and life. Social isolation, injustices within society, and his powerlessness in the political and economic community are among the causes. The attitudes in the established community have helped to perpetuate this deprivation. Through paternalism and outright exploitation of the agricultural worker, even to the withholding of his rights, communities have alienated him from normal access to community services and protections.

  Farm workers need opportunities to identify with the community of which they are a part, develop their own leadership, define their own problems, and work toward solutions in their own way. In light of this, the church should interpret the basic injustice in farm labor and provide encouragement and assistance to the organization of these workers. This does not necessarily mean providing leadership as such but it does mean standing with them and working with them, sometimes against the total community, for equality in the economic, social, and political areas of life. Reconciliation is a primary aim of the church but it becomes a reality only when people come together as equals.

- *Ministry of social acceptance*
  One of the serious deprivations suffered by seasonal workers is the withholding of social acceptance, a common experience they face at the hands of the established communities through which they move and in which they may settle. As human beings they need and are

entitled to a status of respect and dignity in any community. Fear and a lack of understanding tend to make the community ignore their presence or resist their legitimate claims to human consideration in the settled community.

Churches should be open to the inclusion of migratory or settling farm workers in full fellowship, and should seek with sensitivity and imagination to overcome their members' hesitation toward having migrants enter into the fellowship of the churches. A further responsibility of the church is to work for acceptance of migratory workers and their families into the total life of the community, with full appreciation for their cultural contribution.

Ministry of legislative action

Several aspects of the seasonal farm labor problem require legislative action at federal and/or state levels, followed by conscientious administration and enforcement of the laws. Local congregations, denominations, and the councils of churches, acting within the framework of their respective doctrines and policies, should press vigorously for the enactment and implementation of legislation on state and national levels along the lines set forth in the following list of legislative goals:

1. Inclusion of farm workers under the provision of the National Labor Relations Act, with accessibility to the services of the National Labor Relations Board.
2. Better federal minimum wage coverage for farm workers, including seasonal workers.
3. Extension of unemployment compensation coverage to farm workers.
4. A more effective job placement procedure with concern for the farm worker.
5. An adequate farm labor housing code.
6. Elimination of detrimental child labor and any other circumstances that interfere with school attendance by children of seasonal workers.
7. Adequate funds from federal and state sources for education of migrant children, day-care services, health services, housing and sanitation facilities, and other welfare services needed to overcome the special disabilities suffered by seasonal farm workers.
8. An adequate transportation safety code.
9. Elimination of residency requirements as a barrier to eligibility for public assistance and other community services.
10. Expansion of such available vocational training and placement services as are required to retrain and relocate farm workers displaced by mechanization and urbanization.
11. Continued protection against the adverse effects of competition from imported farm workers.
12. Such other legislative enactments as future developments require to bring the living and working conditions of all farm workers to a parity with those of other labor groups in American society.

SUMMARY OF GOALS

LISTED below is a summary of the goals to be sought, and a reaffirmation of the great, overriding goals which must guide and motivate our action programs in behalf of seasonal farm workers. All specific efforts should be measured by their contribution to such goals:

- In the nation's all-out war on poverty, the farm labor front is a major one. Poverty in America will not be overcome until these people are enabled to lift themselves above the poverty line.
- All discrimination and exploitation which relegate farm workers to second-class citizenship must be eliminated.
- Social acceptance must be extended to them and must not be abridged because of race, ethnic background, or educational level.

Above all, the goals sought and the methods used must support the claims of farm workers for a dignity of their own, with full voice in the decisions that affect their life.

THE DIRECT PROGRAM OF THE MIGRANT MINISTRY

THE TYPES of programs offered vary from community to community. The following have been reported during this past year:

Educational programs:
preschool canvassing and classes
school enrollment
tutoring and remedial work
driver education
classes in Spanish and English
citizenship classes
shop and industrial arts
adult literacy classes
sewing
lending libraries

Recreational programs:
camping
scouting and 4-H clubs
boys and girls clubs
crafts
leisure-time activities
softball teams
fiestas
welcome parties
supervised recreation

Religious programs:
worship services
literature distribution
visitation
vacation church schools
films
family-night gatherings
Christian education programs

Health and welfare services:
emergency aid
counseling
day-care centers
travelers aid
material aid
Social Security information

Job placement services

Vocational retraining

Teen-age centers

Medical, dental and eye clinics

Foster-home care for infants

Reports from the states indicate that the most important program emphases continue to be in the realm of direct spiritual and physical ministries, cooperation with state agencies, improvement of community

relationships with the migrants and their families, and interreligious cooperation. Healthy signs are being seen in the marked improvement found when farmers and growers are on committees that deal with standards that need to be set up locally on housing, sanitation, and related matters. Depth programs are becoming possible as volunteers continue their work in succeeding summers, and migrant families return to the same places. In some areas, a year-round program is developing with those migrants who are beginning to settle down.

TRANSPORTATION

IMPROVEMENT of traveling conditions for farm workers has been a goal since 1920. Progress has been made; voluntary action by progressive growers and communities has seen to that. National probing into the problem has helped. Continued study is being given to: a) the adequacy of the Interstate Commerce Commission's present enforcement authority; b) the effectiveness of the cooperative procedures of the Commission and the Department of Labor, under the Crew Leader Registration Act, in overcoming the difficulties of the spot-check safety inspection program; and c) the desirability of eliminating the exclusion from the jurisdiction of the Commission of those vehicles transporting migrant workers less than seventy-five miles.

In spite of efforts to eliminate the exploitation of migrant workers by crew leaders, through the Crew Leader Registration Act, flagrant violations are continually reported by our Migrant Ministry staff. In some areas authorities seem unable to take action even when intolerable situations are reported to them, either because they lack the initiative, or because powerful grower organizations are on hand to protect "their boys."

HUMAN RELATIONS

THERE ARE both advantages and disadvantages to community volunteer programs. Recruitment and training of a diversified staff, the need for

STATES THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE MIGRANT MINISTRY

Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
Florida
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Missouri
Nebraska
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

sustained effort and motivation of the power structure in the town, all pose their distinct problems. In addition, contacts between the migrants and the interested town leaders are sometimes discouraged by a few grower-employers. In some cases, the churches are indifferent or even hostile to the seasonal farm workers. Facilities or equipment for needed programs may not be available, and money may be scarce. Many church members may not desire involvement with a depressed economic group having a lower education attainment. Blood, sweat, dirt, and tears repel as frequently as they produce compassion. William H. Koch, Jr., has written a book entitled *Dignity of Their Own*, which is valuable in understanding the migrant's point of view. Herein are case studies of three communities in which large numbers of settling-down migrants are found. The book depicts procedures followed in involving these ex-migrants in planning and decision-making in areas vital to their lives in the dominant communities.

From the Christian point of view, however, social acceptance and inclusion in the life of the local community are fundamental goals. They must be searched for and developed with great sensitivity. Some church people stand on this growing edge of human relations. They are the ones who are expected to go out of their way to talk with the migrants and welcome them into full participation in the community's cultural and religious life. Many minority-groups and poverty-stricken people reflect distinctive cultural patterns. One thing that could unite them with each other and with the townsmen is a common spiritual need that can be answered by and through the churches. Access to the basic ministries of the Christian faith should be available to all in worship services and Christian education. All church and community leaders are urged to take every available means to become enlightened in regard to the nature of the migrant situation and the best means to meet the challenges within their communities. Extensive use of the booklet *So You Want to Help Migrants* is encouraged. A clear understanding of the migrant situation is expressed in the new book by the Rev. William E. Scholes, *The Next Move for the Migrants.*

AN ECUMENICAL VENTURE

The Migrant Ministry has been referred to as the most extensive ecumenical field program in the United States. Excellent cooperation and participation is effected with Roman Catholics through membership in the National Migrant Advisory Committee, which gives guidance and counsel to the National Council's Committee on Migrant Work. There is also frequent direct consultation with the Bishops' Committee for Migrant Workers, the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, and others. Cooperation with Roman Catholics on the local level varies with each situation. It is usually strong among the denominations that are members of the National Council of Churches; these major national denominational bodies designate the National Council as their agent in the field.

ORGANIZATION

UNTIL this decade very little had been done to organize agricultural workers in this country. Unions have obtained a foothold in California, where strikes were used in the early sixties to obtain better wages and working conditions. The attention of the nation has been focused on the problems of both migrants and growers during the past year as the effort toward organization was made by the National Farm Workers Association under the leadership of Cesar Chavez.

GROWER CONCERNS

ALTHOUGH growers vary greatly in their attitudes and practices, all of them are caught in the toils of a highly competitive enterprise. The Migrant Ministry and the churches have an obligation to seek understanding of the growers' problems and to help find a solution to the national problems which will provide for an adequate standard for all farm workers and a fair return to the growers. At the same time, in view of the wide gap in levels of living between farm workers and the general consumer community, the churches must continually impress upon all citizens their ethical responsibility to improve living and working conditions for seasonal labor, even at cost to themselves.

It is the intent of the Migrant Ministry to "let justice roll down" on both the migrant and the employer. The problems of the migrant and the problems of the grower have been seen as two sides of the same coin. Solutions to any problems should favorably affect both sides. They can only come about with a concerted, responsible, and democratic organization that will press forward toward the goal of economic and civic self-help. For the farm workers, their right to organize into labor unions and bargain collectively with employers is recognized. For the employers, it is imperative that profits be sufficient to care for production and marketing. Both are part of the total national economy.

MIGRANTS WHO ARE SETTLING DOWN

THE PROBLEMS mentioned in regard to the migrant continue to be his problems when he becomes an ex-migrant by settling down in one place. Abandoned farm houses and derelict barns housing one or two families are rarely regulated by sanitation codes. Many become squatters on the edges of towns, creating slums that are unwanted by the towns even more than by the ex-migrants themselves. Consequently, these resettlers are isolated from community life and services. Without education and skills, it is hard to find and keep jobs. Some status churches want no part of them, or salve their consciences by delivering baskets of food at Thanksgiving and Christmas time.

Now, for the first time in history, we can see ways and means of easing the lot of the settling down migrant. Those farm workers who express the

desire, and often with encouragement of Migrant Ministry staff, may receive, through O.E.O. programs, necessary basic education and job retraining. With the assistance of the Migrant Ministry and with the help of local church people, a place can be found for them—homes, jobs, social acceptance.

There are a total of thirty-eight state committees to maintain relationships and develop direct program. It is estimated that in the current program, the Migrant Ministry involves a staff of six hundred and a corps of fifteen thousand volunteers for various types of direct service for approximately 200,000 migrant people. This represents not quite one-fourth of the migrants in the thirty-eight reporting states.

THE CHALLENGE

WHAT makes a ministry to migrants relevant and effective? How can cultural and educational gaps between groups be bridged? How can the vision of local residents be broadened so they want to become involved with their migrant neighbors? What can be done about vested interests? How can indigenous leadership be developed among migrants who have traditionally not participated in group activities? What can be done to aid resettlement of migrants so they are a part of the mainstream of American life? There are people across the country who are searching for the answers to these questions and others. These problems are challenges and opportunities for the church. They are challenges to the nation as a whole and to its various segments. These challenges cry out for Christian principles to be applied. The Migrant Ministry seeks to do this.

FINANCES

THE NATIONAL migrant budget is supported by annual appropriations from denominational boards, plus a share of the World Day of Prayer offerings contributed by United Church Women. Gifts are also received from foundations, corporations, churches, and individuals.

Budgets totaling more than twice that of the national budget were raised in the states participating.

National migrant budget	$ 253,110
Total of state migrant budgets	537,613
Total of local migrant budgets	284,531
Total for the Migrant Ministry	$1,075,254

In addition to gifts of money it should be noted that thousands of boxes of supplies and thousands of hours of volunteer services were contributed.

RESOURCES

Next Move for the Migrants by William E. Scholes . . . . . $ .85
(Friendship Press)

This Is the Migrant by Louisa R. Shotwell 60
(Friendship Press)

Dignity of Their Own by William H. Koch, Jr. 1.95
(Friendship Press)

Leader's Packet: Ministry to Migrant Children
(Vacation Church School Packet)
Single copy free, additional copies $1.00 each

Please Give Us a Chance to Grow . . . . . 100 for $4.00
(Single copy free)

*Let Justice Roll Down**

*So You Want to Help Migrants**

*National Goals for the 5th Decade**

*Is There Any Hope for Them?**

*Bulletin Insert—The Forgotten People**

Consider the Workers of the Field—filmstrip, for sale only . . . $5.00
Order from: The Migrant Ministry
National Council of Churches
475 Riverside Drive
New York, New York 10027

The Harvesters by Louisa R. Shotwell $4.50
(Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961)

Harvest of Despair by Dale Wright $4.95
(Beacon Press, 1965)

Roosevelt Grady by Louisa R. Shotwell 50
(Grossett & Dunlap, paperback by Tempo, 1964)

The Slaves We Rent by Truman Moore $4.95
(Random House, 1965)

* Free in limited quantities.

The Migrant Ministry
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE U.S.A.
475 Riverside Drive, New York, New York 10027

10M-66 Printed in U.S.A.